

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUDAPE 01182 140754Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO USIA WASHDC

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SUBJECT: P&C BUDAPEST INFORMATION PROGRAM: SALT TALK
AND VANCE MOSCOW VISIT

1. DURING PAST WEEKS OF INTENSE PUBLIC DEBATE ASSOCIATED
WITH US-SOVIET SALT TALKS AND SECRETARY VANCE'S MOSCOW VISIT,
P&C BUDAPEST HAS ORGANIZED AN INTENSIVE AND MULTI-FACETED
INFORMATION PROGRAM TO BRING US POSITIONS ON SALT ISSUE
IN AS MUCH DEPTH AND DETAIL AS POSSIBLE TO ATTENTION OF
HUNGARIAN MEDIA LEADERS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND WITHIN
LIMITED POSSIBILITIES TO PUBLIC OPINION IN GENERAL.

2. ON EVE OF SECRETARY VANCE'S ARRIVAL IN MOSCOW, AN EVENING
OF VTR PROGRAMS WAS ORGANIZED AT PAO RESIDENCE FOR KEY
MEDIA LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS DEALING WITH US AFFAIRS.
VTRS INCLUDED THOSE SEGMENTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH SECRETARY
VANCE, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HAROLD BROWN AS WELL AS PRESIDENT
CARTER'S UN SPEECH AND THIRD PRESS CONFERENCE DEALING WITH
EAST-WEST RELATIONS, SLAT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELATED INTER-
NATIONAL ISSUES. PROGRAM PROVIDED FIRST OPPORTUNITY IN
HUNGARY TO ACTUALLY SEE NEW AMERICAN LEADERSHIP
EXPLAIN AND OUTLINE US POSITION, THEIR BACKGROUND AND
UNDERLYING RATIONALE, JUST BEFORE BEGINNING OF
MOSCOW TALKS.

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3. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING MOSCOW MEETINGS, AND TAKING
ADVANTAGE OF FORTUNATE COINCIDENCE OF ASSISTANT
SECRETARY HARTMAN'S VISIT TO HUNGARY, A ROUND-TABLE
BACKGROUND DISCUSSION WAS ORGANIZED APRIL 5 WITH TOP
MEDIA LEADERS AT PAO RESIDENCE, WHERE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY HARTMAN GAVE AN EXCELLENT BRIEFING ON MOSCOW

TALKS AND EXPLAINED WITH SKILL AND GREAT CLARITY RATIONALE FOR US PROPOSALS. AT SAME TIME, SECRETARY HARTMAN ALSO PLACED MOSCOW NEGOTIATIONS INTO MUCH-NEEDED PERSPECTIVE, EMPHASIZING THAT INSTEAD OF INCORRECTLY QUALIFYING THEM AS A FAILURE, THEY SHOULD BE REGARDED AS ANOTHER STEP ON A HIGHLY COMPLEX ROAD TOWARD ARMS REDUCTIONS TO WHICH BOTH SIDES REMAIN COMMITTED. NEEDLESS TO SAY SECRETARY HARTMAN'S GESTURE OF TAKING THE TIME FOR A FRANK AND METICULOUS BRIEFING, AND THE OBVIOUSLY AUTHORITATIVE NATURE OF HIS REMARKS MADE A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON AUDIENCE.

4. THIS IMPACT BECAME PROMINENTLY VISIBLE EVENING OF APRIL 12 WHEN HUNGARIAN TELEVISION PRESENTED 20 MINUTE PROGRAM CALLED PANORAMA ANALYZING STATUS OF SALT TALKS. THREE OF FOUR PANELISTS HAD BEEN PRESENT AT BOTH POST PROGRAMS AND ON TELEVISION GAVE A REMARKABLY FACTUAL RUNDOWN OF ISSUES INVOLVED, ALTHOUGH AT THE END THEY INEVITABLE HAD TO SUPPORT SOVIET POSITION AS CORRECT ONE. IN SPITE OF BUILT-IN CONSTRAINTS UNDER WHICH HUNGARIANS HAVE TO WORK, MANY ASPECTS OF US POSITION WERE STILL BROUGHT TO ATTENTION OF PUBLIC. WHILE HAVING TO CONCLUDE IN THEIR ANALYSIS THAT US PROPOSALS WERE "UNFAIR AND UNBALANCED", THEY WERE STILL PRESENTED INITIALLY WITHOUT DISTORTION, ALLOWING VIEWERS SOME CHANGE OF DOING A LITTLE THINKING FOR THEMSELVES.

5. PROGRAM WAS UNIQUE IN ANOTHER RESPECT ALSO.
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IN CONTRAST TO EARLIER MOSCOW TELEVISION PROGRAM ON SAME SUBJECT, AN AMERICAN VIEW WAS EXPRESSED AT FIRST HAND. NYT CORRESPONDENT DAVID BINDER, AN EARLIER PARTICIPANT IN HUNGARIAN TELEVISION'S EAST-WEST DEBATE SERIES, COMMENTED ON US MEDIA REACTION TO MOSCOW TALKS VIA FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PROVIDED BY IMV TO WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT ANDRAS HELTAI WHO INTERVIEWED BINDER APRIL 5 AT IMV STUDIOS.

6. BINDER GOT "EQUAL TIME" WITH HIS FORMER SOVIET DEBATING PARTNER, VALENTIN ZORIN, WHO SPOKE FROM MOSCOW. BINDER'S AND ZORIN'S COMMENTS WERE VASTLY DIFFERENT OF COURSE. ZORIN HAS NO CONSTRAINTS ON OBJECTIVITY AND CAN GIVE ONE-SIDED VIEW OF SOVIET OFFICIAL LINE, WHEREAS BINDER ALWAYS GIVES BOTH SIDES OF A TOPIC THUS BEING MORE BALANCED BUT LOSING THE DEBATE. BOTH SPEAKERS HOWEVER CONCLUDED ON OPTIMISTIC NOTE THAT TALKS ARE CONTINUING AND THERE IS NO REASON FOR DESPAIR.

7. IN ADDITION TO VTRS, IMV FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE, TELEVISION AND A BRIEFING BY SECRETARY HARTMAN, POST WAS ALSO ABLE TO KEEP KEY AUDIENCE MEMBERS REGULARLY INFORMED VIA CONTINUOUS SUPPLY OF FIRST-HAND FACTS VIA EXCELLENT WIRELESS FILE SERVICE. CARTER, VACNE AND BRZEZINSKY PRESS CONFERENCES AND STATEMENTS WERE ALWAYS PROMPTLY AVAILABLE THROUGH EFFICIENT IPS WORK, AND WERE GIVEN WIDE SAME DAY DISTRIBUTION.

8. AS EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS, WE OFFER A STATEMENT HEARD FROM SEVERAL CONTACTS: "WE WISH OUR SOVIET ALLIES WOULD KEEP US HALF AS WELL INFORMED".

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 13-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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